



## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Zheng et al. Examiner: Unassigned  
 Serial No.: 09/775,370 Group Art Unit: 1763  
 Filed: February 1, 2001 Docket No.: VLSI.225DIV1  
 Title: OPTIMIZED METAL ETCH PROCESS TO ENABLE THE USE OF ALUMINUM PLUGS

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence and the papers, as described hereinabove, are being deposited in the United States Postal Service, as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on August 21, 2001.

By: *Erin M. Nichols*

Erin M. Nichols

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT (37 C.F.R. § 1.71(b))**

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
 Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

With regard to the above-identified application, the items of information listed on the enclosed Form 1449 are brought to the attention of the Examiner.

This statement should be considered because it is submitted either within three months of the filing date or before the first Office Action of the above-identified application. Accordingly, no fee is due for consideration of the items listed on the enclosed Form 1449.

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.98(a)(2), a copy of each document or other information listed on the enclosed Form 1449 is provided.

Please note that any notations or markings on the attached documents do not reflect particular relevance, or lack thereof, to the present application, nor were they necessarily made by anyone affiliated with the prosecution of the present application.

No representation is made that a reference is "prior art" within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 and Applicants reserve the right, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 or otherwise, to

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establish that the reference(s) are not "prior art." Moreover, Applicants do not represent that a reference has been thoroughly reviewed or that any relevance of any portion of a reference is intended.

Consideration of the items listed is respectfully requested. Pursuant to the provisions of M.P.E.P. 609, it is requested that the Examiner return a copy of the attached Form 1449, marked as being considered and initialed by the Examiner, to the undersigned with the next official communication.

Respectfully submitted,

Crawford PLLC  
1270 Northland Drive  
Suite 390  
St. Paul, MN 55120  
651/686-6633

Dated: August 21, 2001

By: 

Robert J. Crawford  
Reg. No. 32,122

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